**Patrick Charles*

Tomato Frogs *(Dyscophus spp.)*

Plump, Red, and Great for Picking!

Tomato frogs consist of about three (3) species of primarily terrestrial frogs, including *D. antongilii*, *D. insularis*, and *D. guineti*. These colorful frogs are endemic to the island of Madagascar off of the southeastern coast of Africa, where each of the three species in the genus occupy different ranges within the island. Tomato frogs are medium to large pudgy bodied frogs that range in color from reddish, reddish orange, to reddish brown with a paler yellowish underside, and one dark stripe running from behind each eye. Their typically bright red coloration are how these frogs earn their popular common name of "tomato" frog, in addition to their pudgy and rotund appearances and bodies.

When threatened, these frogs will inflate their bodies, making them more difficult to ingest, and may secrete an irritating, potentially toxic secretion from their skin to further make them distasteful to predators. As with most amphibians, they breed and reproduce in the wetter rainy seasons, and are primarily crepuscular. Juvenile and newly formed adult frogs develop their bright reddish-orange coloration as they mature. These frogs are relatively easy to maintain in the terrarium and have long been a fairly popular group of frog species to maintain, provided their care and husbandry requirements are met.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities
Domain: Eukaryota
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata
Class: Amphibia
Order: Anura
Suborder: Neobatrachia
Family: Microhylidae
Subfamily: Dyscophinae
Genus: Dyscophus
Species: *Dyscophus spp.**
**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, tomato frogs can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more in

captivity.

Distribution and Habitat
Tomato frogs are a genus of primarily terrestrial frogs indigenous primarily to the island of Madagascar off of the southeastern coast of Africa, where each of the three species in the genus occupy different ranges within the island. On the island of Madagascar, these species may occur within the tropical to sub-tropical moist, lowland forests and surrounding ditches, canals, slow moving rivers and streams, marshes, swamplands, plantations, gardens, agricultural areas, and residential areas. They can also be found in relatively degraded habitats as well.

Origin/History
Dyscophus spp. Grandidier, 1872. Each of the three specific species would have other authors first describing them during other years.

Tomato Frogs have long been desired in the hobby due to their bright red or orange coloration and ease of care. However, they are classed as a Cites II species in Madagascar, so imports are limited and captive breeding programs supply a good chunk of the frogs in the hobby today (Josh's Frogs).

Experience Level Required
Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size
Adult tomato frogs usually range in size from 2 ½ to 4 inches.

Housing and Enclosure
Enclosure System: Primarily Moist-Terrestrial to Semi Fossorial. Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 10 to 15 gallon long glass aquarium or terrarium is suitable for these frogs. Provide additional live or artificial foliage, logs, cork bark, or other cage furnishings for added security and aesthetic appeal. Substrates that retain some moisture and humidity should be used such as coconut fibers, sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, or potting soil for more naturalistic enclosures. Tomato frogs will burrow into their substrate, which should be provided. Substrate should also be pesticide free. Provide a large, shallow water dish in the enclosure and change at least 2 to 3 times weekly. Spot clean daily. Also mist the enclosure at least once every day to 3 days.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity
Tomato frogs have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element).Tomato frogs can be maintained at ambient temperatures of between 75 and 80 degrees F, but do not allow for temperatures to drop below or rise above this range. A 12 to 14 hour light cycle can also be provided if overhead lighting is used. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well. Tomato frogs can be maintain at, or near humidity levels of 70 to 75%.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition
Insectivorous*;* In the wild, tomato frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. They will occasionally catch and consume other smaller

vertebrates as well. In captivity, feed tomato frogs a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be fed microfauna as we;; such as springtails, isopods, or fruit fly cultures as well if small enough. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Tomato frogs also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

As with most amphibians, tomato frogs do not enjoy excessive amounts of handling, and can secrete a sticky, potentially irritating skin secretion when handled roughly. All amphibians breathe and respire through their skin, as well as absorb water through this means. It is therefore important to avoid wearing any chemicals or lotions on your hands, which can be potentially harmful or even fatal to amphibians. It is also important to wash or rinse hands thoroughly, and ensure they are adequately moistened before and after handling any amphibians in order to prevent them from drying out.
Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact:
Eric.S.Roscoe@gmail.com